

GOOD AFTERNOON, FRIENDS,

We wanted to bring you up to date on 3 current matters at The Spit.

1. A FURTHER UPDATE on the TTP Update!!

The City of Toronto staff report titled “Tommy Thompson Park Update” (item IE 22.5) mentioned in our email of June 4th, was approved by City Council in June. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) commissioned a similar update for their Board, which was passed at the June 25th TRCA Board meeting. As we did at the City, we filed a lengthy letter with the TRCA Board, and one of the co-chairs spoke at the “virtual” meeting.

Similar to the City report, the TRCA report updated its Board members as to the significance of The Spit/Tommy Thompson Park, addressed the ownership and governance issues, and agreed to start the process to resolve these issues. The report also sets the table for budgetary requests for park operations.

We were generally pleased with the TRCA report and its direction. Because these two reports (City and TRCA) were very similar, our statements in our last email remain true: However remaining vigilant, there were some items which we felt required further discussion and emphasis, so that the unique nature of The Spit urban wilderness and park experience is maintained and amplified, and not reduced or lost in the shuffle. Our TRCA deposition is attached to this email, should you wish to read it. FOS was encouraged to learn that a Board member has accepted our invitation for a guided walk at the Spit!

2. While committees meet, enforcement issues continue.

While we are pleased to see that enforcement and staffing at the Spit has increased, we are still totally dismayed about evening bush parties and bonfires, and, even on the Canada Day weekend, an all-night rave! Enforcement must cover the evenings too, (it’s not just 9 to 5) and enforcement must include barriers so that cars carrying DJ audio equipment cannot drive out on The Spit. This weekend also saw large parties. This wanton behaviour is a serious threat to The Spit and its environment, and must be halted by the City, and the TRCA, immediately. Under the current joint management agreement, the City is responsible for enforcement. Just saying to call 311 is not the answer.

Arising from this rave event, the TRCA provided us with the following contact information, should you witness any unacceptable behaviour there. If you witness active parties – especially in the evening or at night at the Spit – please report them to 55 Division on the non-emergency line 416-808-2222 for an immediate response and enforcement. Indicate there’s a party, drinking and disorderly conduct. Unfortunately, a friend called this number on the weekend regarding the group parties, and received no answer: we are still awaiting confirmation that this number is in effect.

In any case, dial as needed; also call or write Councillor Fletcher, and Mayor Tory: Stress that The Spit and TTP need continued and upgraded enforcement NOW, before it is too late. The Spit can’t wait for the new TTP Joint Management Committee (2021) (approved in the TTP Update by Council and the TRCA.. see Item 1) to prepare its 3 year work programme. These issues must be dealt with today!

3. Commercial filming update:

We understand the TRCA is working on a watershed-wide filming policy for all their properties. We have stressed that it cannot be “a one-size-fits-all” policy: the Spit is totally different than Black Creek Pioneer Village, for example. We continue to maintain that commercial filming of the size and scale we witnessed over the last 9 months is totally unacceptable for The Spit/TTP.

We’d also like to point out that the draft filming policy referred to by Councillor Fletcher was simply that: a draft presented in 2011 to the [volunteer] Tommy Thompson Park User Group (TTPUG) (of which FOS was a member) and to our knowledge remains a draft to this day. It was NEVER finalized, never approved by TTPUG, never sent to TRCA management or to the TRCA Board. In fairness, at that time, these mega productions we witnessed over the last year were never contemplated, and, also, the park was not de facto open 7 days a week. It is this size and scope and scale of recent productions, with its damage, litter, car idling, disruption of park uses, etc., that has caused us to reiterate that The Spit is not for commercial filming.

Many thanks,

Friends of the Spit. July 13, 2021